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A

# VIEW

OF THE

# ISLE OF WIGHT,

## IN FOUR LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

CONTAINING,

Not only a DESCRIPTION of its FORM and principal PRODUCTIONS, but the moſt authentic and material ARTICLES of its natural, political and commercial Hiſtory.

By JOHN STURCH.

——— The roving ſight,
Purſues its pleaſing courſe o'er neighbouring hills,
Of many a different form and different hue,
Bright with ripe corn, or green with graſs, or dark
With clover's purple bloom.

SCOT's AMWELL.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

# LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

GEOGRAPHY and Natural Hiſtory are, I know, *your* favourite amuſements. Had they alſo been *mine*, I might perhaps have been better qualified, or at leaſt better prepared for ſuch a deſcription of this iſland as would have been ſomewhat more anſwerable to both our wiſhes. As it is, the beſt account I can give you of it will be much at your ſervice. I mean to be conciſe, and ſhall certainly be deficient; but however, I ſhall have one advantage over thoſe who have borrowed *all* their information from books, that what falls under my own obſervation, will, at leaſt, have the merit of being *true*.

The Iſle of Wight (by far the largeſt and beſt in the Britiſh channel) enjoys a very commodious ſituation, as being nearly in the centre of that part of the Engliſh coaſt which faces the ſouth, and at a very convenient diſtance from it. Both theſe circumſtances are happily favourable to its commercial and other intercourſes, as well with the county of Hants in particular (of which it is a conſiderable part) as with the parent iſland in general—To the ſouth, as we lie nearly oppoſite to Cape la Hogue in France, and at the diſtance of about eighteen leagues, the ſea on that ſide of us has to the eye the full effect of an open and unbounded ocean. This alone, to one of your taſte for the beauties and ſublimities of nature would, I am certain, be conſidered as a noble and entertaining object. One indeed always beholds it with a pleaſing kind of aſtoniſhment. But when this is enlivened with a view of thoſe floating caſtles which are the pride and bulwark of the Britiſh empire, we have then ſuch a

ſcene

ſcene of grandeur, ſuch a combination of nature and art, as perhaps the whole world cannot equal. Such entertainments are no where more frequently or advantageouſly exhibited than at the eaſt and ſouth eaſt parts of this iſland. Indeed the interior channel called the *Solent*,* preſents us with the ſame objects in kind, and if they fall ſhort in reſpect to degree or magnitude, they make amends by the greater frequency of their appearance, and the natural proſpects are far more diverſified. The breadth of this water is greater or leſs as the lands on either ſide run in a ſtrait or winding direction. In moſt places it may be five or ſix miles over, but in ſome, eſpecially towards the weſt, not near ſo far. In one part in particular, there is ſo great a projection of the land towards the iſland as to leave a paſſage by water, of little more than a ſingle mile. There is a tradition which

* Otherwiſe *Solvent*, perhaps *à ſolvendo*, from its property of looſing or ſeparating the two oppoſite ſhores.

has been credited by ſome reſpectable writers, that here was once a compleat Iſthmus. I am not antiquarian enough either to eſtabliſh this fact or to confute it.§ It ſeems however, pretty certain, that if this were ever the caſe at all, it muſt have been more than 2000 years back. The Romans of that time conſidered this part of our country as an iſland, and ſpeak of it under the name of *Vectis*, or ſome times *Vecta*. As ſuch alſo it was laid down both in *Pliny's* and *Ptolomy's* Geography ‖ though the former placed it by miſtake between Britain and Ireland—But to paſs this no very intereſting circumſtance, in its

§ The ſtory is that the Carthaginians, who in their proſperity engroſſed moſt of the commerce of thoſe times, had ſettlements in the Scilly iſlands—that they bought up the tin of Cornwall, conveyed it by the above ſuppoſed Iſthmus to the ſouth of what is now the Iſle of Wight—From thence tranſported it to Gaul, and ſo to the ports of the Mediterranean. But theſe things are at leaſt too minute for the ſmall ſcale of my plan. See Camden with Gibſon's notes, &c.

‖ Ptolomæus inter Galliam et Britaniam—Plinius inter Britaniam et Hiberniam Vectem conſtituit. M. S. penes B. Cook, F. R. S.

preſent

preſent ſtate, it extends to about twenty-four miles in length, and its central breadth, (which is by much the greateſt) is twelve or thirteen. The whole makes a kind of eliptical, though very irregular figure, of about ſixty miles in circumference. According to theſe dimenſions it ſhould, by eliptical meaſurement, contain about 226 ſquare miles, or above 184 thouſand acres of land. But great deductions are due to the narrowneſs of the two extremities, more eſpecially that to the weſt, beſides bays, creeks, &c. ſo that in the opinion of a gentleman, who has had much better opportunities of knowing it than myſelf, ſomewhere about 120 thouſand acres is much nearer the truth.

It may not be improper here to obſerve, that a complete tour round the iſland by water is in the ſummer ſeaſon a very agreeable excurſion. In this caſe, ſuppoſing our departure to be from Cowes to the Eaſt, we then paſs the royal hoſpital at Haſler, the town and harbour of Portſmouth, South-

Sea

Sea Caſtle, &c. on the left, and the pleaſantly riſing village of Ride, the ſeats of St. Johns, Apſley, and Priory, on the right, and in our way to Spithead and St. Helens, places which I need not ſay are of note as the rendezvous of the royal navy.

From thence we proceed to the ſouthern coaſt, commonly called the back of the iſland, which affords many marine objects of curioſity. Such I call thoſe prodigious rocks and cliffs which bound and guard this part of our coaſt, and can only be ſeen to advantage at ſea. There is ſomething extremely amuſing to the eye in theſe huge maſſes of rough materials.* If they give us no idea of the beautiful, they certainly do of the ſublime, as they have an air of grandeur and magnificence which is awfully pleaſing and attractive. Even their rude deformity has a fitneſs in it to contend with the ruder element which they are meant to controle. One ſees with no little ſatisfac-

* A fortreſs built by nature for herſelf. Shakeſpear.

tion,

tion, with what fury they are daily aſſaulted, and with what indignant ſcorn they repel the onſet. In a word, though they may be deſpiſed as objects of deformity, they are in reality our very good friends—they ſay to the encroaching foe, in the words of him who appointed them their ſtation, "Hitherto ſhalt thou come and no further, and here ſhall thy proud waves be ſtayed."

You will hence anticipate the remark, that having theſe natural ramparts to defend us, we have alſo another advantage from them, which is, that we are in little apprehenſion of being invaded by foreigners in that quarter. We are happy in this truth; as there are in reality but few places in all the coaſt which are acceſſible to ſhips of any burthen or force; and in the only part where we are moſt vulnerable we have a fortreſs which mounts twenty pieces of cannon, and has embraſures for more upon occaſion.* It makes a pretty object as we

* Sandown Fort.

paſs

paſs by it, being well built and kept in good repair, but is not conſtantly garriſoned, as moſt buildings of this kind are now conſidered as of ſmall national conſequence.

About two miles to the weſtward of this there is another opening; but the ſhore is flat, and admits not of the near approach of ſuch ſhips as might give us alarm; this is called *Shanklin Chine*; which being a conſiderable natural curioſity, ſuch as may deſerve a mention. The *Chine*, as they call it, (for what reaſon I know not) is made by an opening of one of the cliffs above mentioned. It appears as though it were rent from top to bottom. The mouth of the gap ſtretches to a vaſt width, on the one ſide almoſt perpendicular, on the other more ſhelving. The bottom is, for the moſt part, a level ſmooth beach, where one may walk at low water and ſurvey theſe ſtupendous heights with much pleaſure. The ſide which is moſt upon a declivity is mounted by means of a large

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number of inartificial ſteps, by which we aſcend to a little cottage, which is kept open as a houſe of accommodation for ſuch company as either curioſity or diſſipation may happen to collect: as ſuch it is eſteemed as one of the curioſities of the iſland, and much frequented both by ſtrangers and others. The method is, either for ſuch parties to carry with them their own proviſions, and get it there made ready for their uſe, or to take the chance of what the houſe or vicinage will afford them: of the latter ſort crabs and lobſters in their ſeaſon, and in their higheſt excellence, are ſeldom or never wanting. A few miles further on will bring us to another place, equally if not more frequented for the ſame pleaſureable purpoſes. The name of this is *Steephill*, late a choſen ſituation for a delightful villa, built by the Right Honourable Hans Stanley, our governor. This building is in the genteel cottage taſte, (*ſimplex munditiis*) adorned with a variety of rich and curious paintings within, and without by a plea-

a pleaſure-garden, ſhrubbery, &c. Near this is alſo a houſe of entertainment, to which ſtrangers are invited by ſcenes which are romantic beyond deſcription. We there not only enjoy a fine open proſpect of the ſea, (from which the diſtance is but about a furlong) but are in full view of a large tract of land, which has not, that I know, its parallel. It commonly goes by the name of *Under-Cliff*, becauſe included between the ſea on one hand, and a high cliff on the other. This cliff extends ſome miles in length, a great part of which is ſo regularly perpendicular, that at a ſmall diſtance one would really take it for ſome old rampart-wall that had formerly been raiſed by art. The tract of land betwixt this and the ſea is perhaps about half a mile broad, rather uneven and hillocky in its appearance indeed, but of ſo rich a ſoil, and ſo finely cultivated, that no part of the iſland can boaſt a more excellent produce. To this its advantageous ſituation, in reſpect to warmth, no doubt greatly contributes.

butes. Its expoſure is to the ſouth. The cliff, which riſes ſo much above it, is as a natural garden-wall ſheltering it from the northern blaſts, and reflecting the ſolar rays with redoubled force. The fine ſprings and natural caſcades which adorn this favourite ſpot, may alſo operate to the ſame fertilizing effect; but however this be, it is all together, one of the moſt pleaſing and ſingular objects of the kind that is any where to be met with.*

To proceed, however, with our voyage. After leaving this curious phœnomenon, and getting round a pretty large cape, we are brought into *Chale Bay*, ſo denominated from the pariſh of Chale, by which it is environed. This bay is lined with one continued chain of thoſe tremendous rocks which are ſo often fatal to the hapleſs ma-

* It is by moſt ſuppoſed, and perhaps not without reaſon, that this part of the land formerly gave way —ſeparated from what is now the cliff, and ſettled in this ſurprizing form. This may ſeem the rather probable, as the report is, that at a ſmall diſtance there is ſuch another fall under water.

riner. The ſituation of it is ſuch as to occaſion a moſt violent roll of tide into it, ſo that ſhips ſailing upon a lee-ſhore, and eſpecially in the night, are unwarily driven upon theſe rocks and often beat to pieces. Few winters paſs without misfortunes more or leſs of this kind, of which ſome people have made a very lucrative perhaps, but certainly a very barbarous advantage. Of late years indeed ſuch diſaſters have fallen under the immediate regulation of proper officers, and all plundering diſcouraged by the puniſhment of its detection. However ſmall the advantage of this may finally be to the merchant, humanity will delight in the ſuppreſſion of all cuſtoms of ſuch extreme depravity as the above-mentioned. But I am again wandering from my ſubject, and therefore proceed to obſerve, that the next object which particularly ſtrikes our attention, is a long range of white cliffs, near a village called Freſh Water: they are of a chalky ſubſtance and a prodigious magnitude; ſome of them riſe to the height of

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600 feet above the ſea, which waſhes them. They excite curioſity alſo on this ſingular account, that in the ſummer months they are inhabited by incredible numbers of exotic birds, which ſeem to aſſemble themſelves purely to enjoy the advantage of theſe warm and glowing rocks to hatch their eggs, and be nurſeries for their young. This however is the uſe they make of them, for which purpoſe their firſt appearance is generally about the middle of May, and they produce a new generation fit to emigrate by about the middle of Auguſt following, at which time they take themſelves off, and we ſee no more of them till the next breeding ſeaſon: they are of two or three different ſpecies, as is plain from their beaks and plumage, and whilſt with us, they get their ſubſiſtence out of the ſea; for this reaſon their fleſh is too rank for human food, but yet they are not altogether uſeleſs: the fiſherman is glad of their carcaſſes for his bait, and the upholſterer will give a good price for their feathers: their eggs,

which are about the ſize of thoſe of a duck, are ſaid to be full as good alſo for any culinary purpoſes: the country people therefore want not motives to exerciſe their ſkill and dexterity in taking them: they have a way of doing it, which for its oddity may deſerve a mention. In the firſt place a large ſtake or iron bar is driven into the top of the cliff—to this is faſtened a cart-rope, or ſomething of like ſtrength, having at the other end of it a ſtick put croſs-wiſe for the adventurer to ſit upon, or ſupport himſelf by; and with this ſimple apparatus he lets himſelf down at the front of this horrid precipice, there he attacks his intended prey as it flies in or out of its neſt, and ſecures as much as he can of it. *Nil eſt mortalibus arduum*, is a maxim which theſe rude artiſts undoubtedly verify, but whatever tempting profits may attend theſe enterprizes, you will hardly ſuppoſe they will ſtand in need of a royal patent to keep the trade to themſelves.

I fear you will be ready to think, that theſe harmleſs ſtrangers have far leſs excuſ-

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able perſecutors, I mean ſuch (and many ſuch there are) who have no other object but that of meer diverſion in going out in boats to ſhoot at them. The report of a gun cauſes ſuch numbers of them to fly out and hover round their aſſailants, as are aſtoniſhing, and it may doubtleſs afford ſome kind of amuſement to wound and deſtroy. But will humanity ſubſcribe to this wanton recreation, or may it not rather be reproved in the language of the pelted frogs? "Gentlemen, you ſhould conſider that what is *ſport* to you is *death* to us and our helpleſs orphans alſo.

Upon leaving however theſe temporary coloniſts (which I ſhould always chuſe to do without diſturbing them) we preſently arrive at the weſtern extremity of the iſland. This preſents us with a full view of that remarkable group of rocks ſo well known by the name of the *Needles*. They are perhaps ſo called in reference to their ſharp and craggy points. Several of them are at conſiderable diſtances from the land as well

as from each other, and as they riſe to the height of many feet above the water, they appear at a diſtance like the remains of ſome broken towers which had been ſhattered and thrown down by an earthquake. They are nevertheleſs of nature's own curious but unpoliſhed workmanſhip, and have doubtleſs ſtood for immemorable ages without any material changes. Nothing however is an abſolute proof againſt the injuries of time. It is but a few years ſince that one even of theſe ſolid pyramids yielded to the fury of a ſtorm and fell, to the no ſmall ſurprize of thoſe who were within hearing of the mighty craſh.

When we have cleared theſe rocks (which in the ſeaman's phraſe is going through the Needles) we re-enter the Solent before-mentioned, where the ſcene ſoon becomes more familiar and domeſtic. Inſtead of maſſy rocks and towering cliffs, we have lands in view which riſe with a more eaſy elegance, and the *portus objectu laterum* favours us with a more calm and

placid

placid ſea. In the courſe of this paſſage beſides

> The ſlow aſcending hill, the lofty wood
> That mantles o'er its brow,

we are entertained with a ſight of the caſtles of Hurſt and Calſhot, Lutterell's Tower *, the town of Lymington, &c. on the one ſide, and the towns and caſtles of Yarmouth and Cowes, on the other till the whole circuit is completed.

Before we quit this channel however, it may be proper to obſerve, that a number of paſſage veſſels are conſtantly employed upon it to keep up the mutual intercourſes which either pleaſure or buſineſs may call for. There are among theſe, three in government pay called packet boats, which carry the mails from the iſland every day except Friday, and return with them every day except Tueſday. They paſs and repaſs between Southampton and Cowes taking

* Lately erected by the Honourable Temple Lutterell, Eſq. from whom this elegant edifice takes its name.

paſſen-

paſſengers, either with or without horſes or carriages, and one or the other of them is always in readineſs to be hired on any emergency.

Beſides theſe, there are divers other veſſels which make it their buſineſs to go and return daily between Yarmouth and Lymington Ride, Cowes and Portſmouth. By theſe and other means both ſtated and accidental, we have little or no reaſon to complain of our detached and inſular ſituation.

Our voyage, even thus made on paper, has unavoidably taken up ſome time. Having therefore run to ſuch a length on ſcarce any thing more than the meer outlines of my ſubject, I muſt beg leave to reſt till I have a future opportunity of ſaying with how much truth and reſpect,

I am, &c.

LETTER

# LETTER II.

HAVING held you, my dear Sir, in ſome kind of ſuſpence whilſt leading you *round* the iſland, you will now think it time that I ſhould endeavour to conduct you *into* it.

The moſt general as well as natural diviſion of the whole is into two hundreds, called Eaſt and Weſt Medine; that is, into two nearly equal parts, which take their names reſpectively from their ſituations in regard to a rivulet or ſtream, named *Medina*, which runs almoſt through the midſt of the iſland from ſouth to north. This, and much ſuch another ſtream, which riſes a few miles to the weſt of Newport, are the moſt conſiderable runs of water we have. There is indeed one other not much inferior, which riſes in another quarter, and takes

takes an eaſtern direction; but beſides theſe, we have numerous ſprings of leſs note plentifully diſperſed over the country, ſo that on the whole we are well ſupplied with that moſt wholeſome and eſſential article of good water. The ſtreams above mentioned are alſo of ineſtimable value, as the means of manufacturing the principal produce of this country, as will hereafter be noted. Thus are we enriched by them without profuſion, and ſerved by ſtreams which never oppreſs us with floods and inundations. When many other parts are in a manner deluged, we are perfectly free from all apprehenſions of that dreadful kind, as by reaſon of the ſhortneſs of the run our waters have no time to accumulate, but are preſently diſcharged into the boſom of their common parent, the ocean.

As to the more particular or artificial diviſion of this fortunate iſland, it is into twenty-nine very unequal pariſhes: three of theſe contain boroughs, or ſuch as have the privilege of ſending each two members

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to parliament; namely, Newport, Newtown and Yarmouth. Of theſe Newtown claims the precedency, on the ſcore of priority of exiſtence, and is ſaid to have been one of the moſt conſiderable, as it is allowed to be one of the moſt ancient places in the iſland. At preſent, like Old Sarum, it is ſcarce equal to a common village; it has indeed a mayor, corporation, and town-hall, but this body conſiſts not of inhabitants of the place, but of proprietors of certain burgage tenures, which entitle them to a vote in the choice of their members.

Yarmouth is alſo much inferior in its preſent ſtate to what it is ſaid to have once been. Its caſtle has been already mentioned, and it has ſtill a weekly market, a town-hall, a kay for ſhipping, ſome few genteel houſes, and a moderate number of inhabitants. There are two good inns, of which the ſhips that occaſionally anchor in the road, and paſſengers to and from Lymington, are the chief ſupports. The election of their members is in the majority

rity of their corporation, which conſiſts moſtly of out-burgeſſes.

The capital therefore in all reſpects (that of antiquity excepted) is Newport. The ſituation of this town is nearly in the middle of the whole iſland, to which, with ſome other circumſtances equally favourable to its becoming the centre of buſineſs, it has doubtleſs gradually owed its preſent ſuperiority, and in which there is no danger of its being ever rivalled. Among theſe advantages of ſituation, may be reckoned the confluence of the two fore-mentioned ſtreams, which by the help of a tide which flows quite up to the town, makes a very good navigable river. At this point of union is built a kay, which is furniſhed with a proper crane for the purpoſe of loading or unloading veſſels or lighters; and the neighbouring ſhores are occupied by convenient ſtorehouſes to contain the corn or other commodities which are occaſionally ſent out or imported.

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As to the town itſelf, it contains 550 dwellings, is ſituated on a very eaſy aſcent of ground, and chiefly diſpoſed of in three parallel ſtreets in length, and as many in breadth. Between theſe, or at the points of their interſection, are three large ſquares, appropriated to the ſeveral markets of cattle, corn, and poultry, though it muſt be confeſſed that the original beauty and uniformity of them have apparently ſuffered by too great an indulgence to encroachments. The public buildings, are a ſpacious church (which has a good organ) in the centre of one of theſe ſquares; and three other places for divine worſhip, after the manner of the ſeveral denominations of Proteſtant Diſſenters, Independents, Baptiſts, and Quakers,* a guild or town-hall, and a free grammar ſchool, for a certain number of boys, and at which many young gentlemen from abroad are uſually boarded.

* That of the Quakers, has lately been diſuſed, there being none of that denomination at preſent remaining.

The dwelling-houſes are generally of brick, and rather neat and convenient, than lofty or oſtentatious. The taſte indeed, was formerly too low either for elegance or convenience, as appears from the ſtyle of the few older houſes, which are ſtill remaining; but the modern ones come under the deſcription juſt mentioned, which yet is every year improving. Among theſe, the mercers, and other ſhops make a very good appearance, both for number and furniture; and the concourſe of people which uſually attend the markets, ſupply them with a good trade. The inns alſo, for the ſame purpoſes of accommodation, are large and well ſupported. There are perhaps few, if any, towns of the like ſize, which have ſo great a number of ſpacious public rooms, for the accommodation of company; among which I muſt not forget to mention, that there is one equally capacious and elegant, in which there is a very genteel periodical aſſembly, for the accommodation of ſuch

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as chuſe to bear a part in thoſe polite amuſements.

The civil internal government of the town (held by charter from James I.) is by a mayor, recorder, and three ſenior aldermen, who act as juſtices of the peace, within the limits of the borough. The election of its repreſentatives is by a majority of twelve aldermen, and the ſame number of burgeſſes, who muſt all be inhabitants at the time when they are choſen into that body.—On the whole, one may venture to ſay, there are few places where independence may meet with more ſources of rational enjoyment, or where virtuous induſtry is better rewarded than in this clean, healthful and elegant town. Its ſtreets are open and airy, its buildings neat and convenient, its environs pleaſant, its proviſions good and plentiful, and its inhabitants friendly and ſociable.

The towns of next conſequence to this, are thoſe of Brading and Weſt-Cowes. The former is a ſmall market town, about ſix or

ſeven miles to the ſouth-eaſt of Newport. The road to it from the place laſt mentioned affords a delightful view of the eaſt part of the iſland, but the place is in no reſpect conſiderable either for extent or buſineſs. Weſt-Cowes, for number of inhabitants, is perhaps not much inferior to Newport itſelf. It takes the epithet of Weſt, from its ſituation in reſpect to another Cowes on the oppoſite ſide of the river or harbour's mouth. A great part of the weſt town ſtands on a hill, and enjoys as pleaſant and extenſive a proſpect as can well be conceived. The air indeed, is rather keen, but for a ſummer reſidence it is extremely eligible. Of late years it has been much uſed by thoſe who are fond of bathing in ſalt water, or are recommended to it for their health. The lower parts of the town, where the chief buſineſs is done are rather crowded, it being a place, which in the ſhipping way, has long poſſeſſed a conſiderable ſhare of trade, and of which that of the Carolina rice ſhips, till the late rupture with America, was a

very

very capital branch. At Eaſt-Cowes is the cuſtom-houſe for the whole iſland, and in both there are merchants, who carry on a foreign trade to a conſiderable amount.

I may add, that Ride oppoſite to Portſmouth, though it be not conſidered as a town, is yet a place of ſome extent, both in building and number of inhabitants, and its neighbourhood is dignified with ſeveral genteel ſeats of independent competence, and which enjoy a moſt elegant ſituation. But having thus mentioned the places of principal note in point of extent, buſineſs, or number of people, I proceed to ſuch as are moſt remarkable upon ſome other accounts.

Among theſe, the names of Cariſbrooke,* and its caſtle are familiar to the hiſtoric ear from their connection with the ſtory of that

* Brompton (Chron. 798,) calls it Withgaraburg, when ſpeaking of the native Britons, who were killed there by the cruelty of Cerdic's nephews. Paucos Britones ejuſdem Inſulæ accolas quos in ea invenire potuerunt in loco qui dicitur *Withgaraburg*.

ill adviſed and unfortunate monarch Charles I. The village is of ſuch antiquity as to coincide with ſome of the moſt early anecdotes of the iſland itſelf. Its ſituation, about three fourths of a mile to the weſt of Newport, is pleaſant enough, but its buildings at preſent are but few and mean, being moſtly occupied by labouring people. Its church has a handſome tower, which ſtanding on an eminence ſhews itſelf to advantage. It is alſo remarkable for its having eight, perhaps as muſical bells as were ever caſt. In the year 1071, this ſacred edifice (dedicated to the honour of St. Mary) was richly endowed by William Fitz-Oſborne, Earl of Hereford, to which was then annexed a convent of Ciſtercian monks. There are ſome remains of the building (now converted into a farm houſe) ſtill retaining the name of the *Priory*. I ſhould have mentioned alſo that nature has enriched this village with ſome fine ſprings of moſt excellent water.

On

On another and much greater eminence, oppoſite to the priory, ſtands the caſtle, which I need not ſay is particularly celebrated, as having been the priſon of the royal perſonage before mentioned in the year 1647.* At that time, no doubt, the whole was in good repair, but being ſuffered to run to ruin (perhaps ever ſince) it is now, in ſome parts eſpecially, in a mournful ſtate of dilapidation. It is ſtill, however, a venerable ruin. The grand entrance, or gateway, has a fine appearance, and ſome of its outworks are tolerably entire. It is ſurrounded by a trench, with a fine terrace walk of about three quarters of a mile, which a pure air and a pleaſant proſpect makes it a very agreeable as well as healthful exerciſe to meaſure over. Within the walls we find ſpacious areas for the refreſhment and diſcipline of the garriſon, a chapel and governor's apartments in pretty good preſervation. Thoſe however, which contained the royal priſoner, are totally demo-

* A good repreſentation, and ſome account of it may be ſeen in the Univerſal Magazine, April 1776.

liſhed,

liſhed, but they ſtill ſhew you the window at which he ineffectually attempted to eſcape. Of late years the governour's houſe has been occaſionally converted into an hoſpital for ſick and wounded ſoldiers from abroad, for which purpoſe (though we do not wiſh to recommend the practice) the ſalubrity of the air, the excellence of the water,* and its diſtance from the means of debauch are circumſtances happily adapted.

We know nothing with certainty of the origin of this antient ſtructure. The moſt early mention of it which has fallen under my notice is about the year 530, when Cerdic, king of the Weſt-Saxons, is ſaid to have beſieged and taken it. But this only implies that at that time, it was a place of ſome ſtrength, without giving any

* This is drawn from a large well 300 feet deep by means of a windlaſs wheel, which is worked by an aſs. The poor drudge (who often exhibits for the entertainment of ſtrangers) is with ſome reluctance brought to his buſineſs, but when the machine is ſet in motion, one may ſee that even an aſs *can* work with ſome ſpirit.

light

light into its origin, or primitive antiquity, or when, or by whom founded. Whether therefore it was originally Roman or Britiſh can only be gueſſed at, though the latter perhaps may be the more probable. Without all peradventure, however, it muſt have undergone many repairs and alterations in ſuch a long courſe of ages, of which the laſt was beſtowed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, as may be gathered by a date ſtill legible at the entrance of the gateway. The Mount, which ſupports the Citadel, ſeems apparently the work of art, and muſt have been effected by immenſe labour. We aſcend to this laſt retreat of the beſieged by a flight of ſteps, near fourſcore in number; and are by no means ill recompenſed for the trouble of getting up to it, by the extenſive and gratifying view which it gives us of the town and river of Newport, the harbour of Cowes, and parts adjacent. Here is alſo a well, which was formerly intended for a ſupply of water, but is now dry and almoſt filled up with rubbiſh.

But I take leave at preſent of theſe monuments of art and antiquity (though proper to be taken notice of as they occur) in order to give ſome attention to thoſe more unfading beauties of nature, for which this iſland is ſo univerſally admired. The almoſt perpetual ſucceſſion of hills and dales which covers the face of it, creates ſuch a wonderful variety of breaks and openings, that the eye of the traveller is continually entertained with new and ſurpriſing landſcapes of nature's exquiſite painting.

It is here the love of novelty and variety, ſo natural to the mind of man, is moſt highly gratified, and at an eaſy expence. It is but changing one's poſition, for which a quarter of an hour's riding is ſufficient, and the ſcene is caſt into a new form; it is varied by ſo many new lines and new diſcloſures of land and water, that it no longer appears to be the ſame thing. In the middle part there is a long and almoſt continued ridge of theſe hills or downs, which runs in a winding direction almoſt through the whole length of the iſland. On theſe are

fed

fed vaſt numbers of ſheep, which yield to the farmer the more than fabulous golden fleece. To the ſouth of theſe the vale is by nature exceeding rich. On the north, though the ſoil is in itſelf leſs generous, yet it is ſo meliorated and improved by art, as to exhibit a pleaſing picture of the moſt neat and induſtrious cultivation. Thus on either ſide we are entertained with rich encloſures laden with corn or other produce, the ſight of which is equally cheering and beautiful. The coppices and clumps of trees, the villages, hamlets, and farm houſes, the *ſumma procul villarum quæ culmina fumunt*, introduce a moſt charming variety, and fill us with the pleaſing ideas of peace and plenty. Theſe fruits are in truth our real earthly riches—they gladden the hearts of their daily thouſands;—repair the waſtes of that toil which Providence has ordained to produce them, and inſpire the mind where wiſdom dwells, with ſentiments of reverence and gratitude. In a word, the uſeful and the pleaſant will alone make up a

*ſatisfying*

*ſatisfying* combination of ideas—It is impoſſible for me to ſay in how many different ſtations this combination is to be met with in high perfection. I wiſh ſome of thoſe ingenious artiſts who give us copies of nature from the fine touches of the pencil would ſelect and execute theſe enchanting views in a maſterly manner.—Their performances would certainly make a noble collection. It is not, however, for my pen to undertake it, I muſt therefore decline all attempts of this kind, and only mention one thing more (which had like indeed to have eſcaped me) that the coppices above-mentioned abound with pheaſants, as the country in general does with hares, partridges, and other ſpecies of what is uſually called game, ſo that the ſportſman wants not here his healthful amuſements. Happily, however, we have no ſuch thing as a fox, for were thoſe noxious and ſubtle animals once to get poſſeſſion of the inacceſſible mountains and cliffs (to which they would doubtleſs

doubtleſs retreat when preſſed) it would be next to impoſſible ever to diſlodge them.

One of the higheſt and moſt remarkable of theſe hills, is named St. Catherine's, on which there are ſtill the remains (viſible at a great diſtance) of an ancient hermitage, dedicated to the honour of that ſaint, and from whence the mountain itſelf took and ſtill bears her name.* It is ſo near the ſea as to admit of a full view of it to the ſouth, and on all the other points it preſents a very extenſive proſpect of the iſland. There are other ſtations where the ſea may be ſeen partially at eight, ten or more places at a time. But I cloſe this long epiſtle with little more than a mention of two or three other remains of the ſame kind. One is on the north ſide towards Ride, called the Abbey

* The hill is 750 feet above high water mark.—The hermitage an octagon, each ſide being four feet, and the height from its baſe to the ſummit 32 feet.—As ſuch it makes a very conſpicuous and uſeful object at ſea.

of Quarr.* It was firſt built by *Baldwin de Rivers*, Earl of Devon, (anno 1132) and by him dedicated to the Holy Virgin. It now contains very few veſtiges of its ancient dignity. In the reign of Edward III. the Abbot was a man of great conſequence, being ſtiled by that monarch *Cuſtos Inſulæ*, or Land-Warden of the Iſland, as appears by warrant ſtill extant, which is addreſſed to him as ſuch, and wherein he is directed to put every thing into a proper ſtate for defence againſt any foreign invaſion.†

To the weſt of this, near E. Cowes, is a large building (now the property and reſidence of the Earl of Clanrickard) called

* This religious houſe, with lands for its ſupport, was confirmed to God and the Holy Virgin, by Richard Earl of Exeter, and the ſon of Baldwin, to pray for the ſouls of his father and mother. At the ſuppreſſion it was valued at 134l. 3s. 11d. per annum.

DUGDALE.

† Rex dilecto ſibi in Chriſto Abbati de Quarrera Cuſtodi Inſulæ Vectæ, &c.

PRYNNE'S RECORDS, p. 136.

*Barton.*

*Barton.* It was firſt erected in the year 1341, as a chapel ſacred to the Holy Trinity, being endowed with lands in mortmain, for the maintenance of a chaplain to celebrate divine ſervice there for ever.

The laſt, but certainly not the leaſt laudable of theſe now antiquated inſtitutions, is the hoſpital of St. Croſs, for the reception of the ſick and infirm, which is near Newport, and ſtill called by the ſame name. Let ſuch as are able, do what good is in the power of their own hand, and without leaving it to poſterity to apply their benefaction. In this ſentiment, I know you will agree with,

Dear Sir, &c.

## LETTER III.

BEFORE I come to ſpeak of the preſent inhabitants, or the commercial ſtate of this iſland (which will cloſe my correſpondence on the ſubject) permit me, dear Sir, to detain you a few minutes with ſuch an account of former occurrences in relation to it, as a few incidental and ſcattered fragments will enable me to collect.

Our primitive inhabitants, you will have no doubt, were of thoſe ancient Britons who poſſeſſed the greateſt part of what is now called England, till on the ſlight pretences which uſually ſerve the ambitious, they were wantonly invaded by the Romans. It does not occur to me, however, that the writers of *their* hiſtory, from whom we borrow the moſt early and authentic accounts of our *own*, afford any conſiderable information in

regard

regard to this iſland in particular. Cæſar, I believe, makes no mention of it at all, at leaſt, I am confident he ſays nothing of any deſcent upon it, and from whence we may reaſonably preſume that in his time there was none. We may therefore conſider Flavius Veſpaſian, afterwards Emperor, as the firſt who diſplayed the Roman Eagle on the Iſle of Wight.* He was at that time Lieutenant General in the Britiſh expedition, undertaken by Claudius, and had no leſs than 32 engagements with our brave anceſtors, took 20 of their towns, (as they affect to call them) and, among the reſt, added this iſland to the Roman empire. This was about the year 47, near a century after Cæſar's firſt invaſion. One would think it had

* In Britaniam a Claudio miſſus, tricies et bis cum hoſte conflixerit, duas validiſſimas gentes, viginti oppida Inſulam Vectam Britanniæ proximam Imperio Romano adjecerit. EUTROP. l. 7. c. 19.

—Duas validiſſimas gentes, ſuperque viginta oppida et Inſulam Vectem in deditionem redegit.

SUET. IN VIT. VESP. c. 4.

been hardly worth their while to have made a pompous boaſt of ſuch an acquiſition. There can be no doubt, however, but that the only reaſon of its being made ſo late, was becauſe it was attempted no ſooner. Such a ſpot as this, had been hitherto regarded as nothing more than a meer appendage to greater conqueſts, which muſt fall of courſe together with them. From this time we muſt be reckoned as ſubjects to Roman government, till that people thought fit to relinquiſh the whole of their Britiſh dominions, which was not till the year 427. Mean while the Britons were rather harraſſed than totally ſubdued; but as it does not appear what part the inhabitants of this iſland bore in the ſtruggle, it is not to my purpoſe to purſue that idea.—We have here therefore a gap of almoſt 400 years, and muſt paſs on to what ſoon afterwards took place, the well known Saxon heptarchy.

It was the modeſty of theſe petty ſovereigns to ſuppoſe that they beſt knew how

to eſtimate and reward their own merit, or that thoſe who preſerved a country had the beſt right to govern it. It was thus they thought fit to pay themſelves for the ſervice they had done the Britons ‡ in repelling the Scots and Picts.—Among theſe the fore-mentioned Cerdic king of the Weſt-Saxons (a province nearly of the ſame extent as the preſent counties of Hants and Dorſet) attacked and ſubdued the iſland. Having ſo done, he made a preſent of it to his two nephews Stuff and Whitgar, or as ſome write it, *Wightgar* * who afterwards ſolely poſſeſſed

‡ Has (ſcil. injurias) ægre tolerant, jam domiti ut pareant nondum ut ſerviant. (Tacit. de Brit. Agricol. vit. c. 13.) Brave fellows!—May their ſons never diſgrace the noble ſpirit of their anceſtors.

* If this be the true ſpelling, probably enough, the name of the iſland itſelf (*Wight*) might derive from this Saxon origin. Some have ſuppoſed (ſee Univerſal Magazine April 1776) that *Cariſbrooke* alſo is as much as to ſay *Whitgarſburgh*, on account of his being buried there.—The thing, to be ſure, is of no conſequence, but I ſhall be pardoned notwithſtanding for obſerving,

poſſeſſed it for nine years, and was buried in the village of Cariſbrooke. †

After him *Wolfer*, king of the Mercians (another branch of the Heptarchy) ſubdued the iſland to his obedience, and in like manner made a compliment of it to his friend *Ethelwold*, king of the South Saxons, that is to ſay, of what we now call *Suſſex* and *Surry*. Ethelwold, it ſeems, had been then lately converted to the Chriſtian faith, and was much indebted for his converſion (ſuch as it was) to the aſſiſtance and encouragement of Wolfar, who alſo adopted him as his ſon in the faith, and did him the honour to receive him with his own hand from the ſacred font. All this might be laudable enough, but ſurely no reaſon, (though it ſeems to have been aſſigned for one) why

obſerving, that this is forced and improbable. *Carr* or *Caer*, is an old word for a caſtle or place of defence, whence *Carliſle*, *Caermarthen*, *Carysfort*, &c. So *Cariſbrooke* from the caſtle and brooke of water ſo near it, is certainly much more natural.

† Brompton's Chronicle (798.)

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he ſhould draw his ſword upon an innocent and inoffenſive people, that he might enrich his pupil with an acceſſion of new territory.—But it does not appear that the men of thoſe days were wont to beſtow much thought on the juſtice or propriety of their proceedings, eſpecially when they were concerned with a people who were of a different religion from their own. Such, it ſeems, was the caſe with theſe iſlanders. If Wolfer and his friend Ethelwold ‖ were converted, they were not. Whether it was that the latter took no care to have his new ſubjects inſtructed, or that they were indiſpoſed to learn, yet ſo we are told it was, that no conſiderable impreſſions were as yet made upon them, and they are repreſented as holding faſt their old druidical ſuperſtition, even ſo late as the year 687. Then

‖ Quorum rex (ſcil. Auſtralium Saxonum) *Ethelwoldus*, ſuaſione regis Wolferi paulo ante a ſancto Birinio Epiſcopo fuerat baptizatus, et a dicto Wolfero de lavacro ſancto ſuſceptus, in cujus adoptionis ſignum Inſulam dederat Vectam et etiam ingentem provinciam occidentalium Saxonum.

or

or then about, it was, that Cædwalla, another king of the Weſt-Saxons, took it into his head to make war with Ethelwold, and having killed both him and his two ſons, the iſland was forced to ſubmit to the yoke of the former *.

Cædwalla is alſo one of thoſe ſtrange characters which the Monkiſh hiſtorians of thoſe times have handed down to us under the idea of their being converts to the chriſtian faith. At this time, however, he was ſo raw a man himſelf as to be as yet uninitiated, † but he had ſo flaming a zeal, it ſeems, as to make terrible havock ‡ among theſe poor people, under the pretence of

* Interea Cædwalla juvenis de regio genere Gervisorum dictum Regem Ethelwold interfecit—Inſulam Vectam adhuc idolatrem debellavit.

† Nondum regeneratus in Chriſto, which then meant nothing more than not having yet received the ceremony of baptiſm.

‡ Cædwalla cepit Inſulam Vectam quæ eatenus tota Idolatriæ dedita atragica cæde indigenas exterminare contendit.

SPELM. 178.

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their obſtinate adherence to idolatry. They had already been reduced, by one devaſtation and another, to about 1200 families, which were now all deſtroyed, except about 2000 ſouls, by this ſon of violence. Theſe ſavings of the ſword were converted by Wilfred, ſometime Archbiſhop of York, but then in exile. This prelate happening to be at the court of Cædwalla, obtained his permiſſion to try what could be done with theſe obſtinate people. Accordingly he ſent miſſionaries * to treat with them. There was however, no great merit in ſucceeding under ſuch circumſtances. It is not to be imagined they were diſpoſed to invite the ſword amongſt them a ſecond time, when they had lately felt it with ſo keen a ſeverity. But what a wretched method of bringing over converts to that religion, which in itſelf is no leſs amiable for the humanity and gentleneſs of its ſpirit, than for the purity and excellence of its truth!

* Per miniſtros verbi Dei quos illuc direxit ab Idolatriæ cultu Inſulam liberavit et ſibi ſubjugavit.

Such,

Such, however, was the diſcipline of a dark and barbarous age, in which Romiſh ſuperſtition, ever haughty and intolerant, had retained the *name* but loſt the *nature* of chriſtianity.

From this æra of our converſion (which do neither us nor the authors of it any great credit) we have no anecdotes of the iſland for more than 200 years, that is till towards the end of the tenth century.

At this time a ſet of Daniſh Pirates (for they were no better) had for many years grievouſly infeſted the Britiſh coaſts. Among other places, the iſland felt the ſmart of their barbarities. They frequently anchored their ſhips within its ſhelter,* and were a ſore annoyance, not only to the iſland itſelf, but to the neighbouring towns of Southampton, Wincheſter, &c. It is needleſs to add, that after theſe barbarians had

* Quotieſcunque in Vecta jacuit—Sim. Dunelm. —Paganorum exercitus (ſcil. Danorum) frequenter Inſulam Vectem adüit, moreque ſolito prædæ inſtitit. Ibid.

effected

effected an eſtabliſhment of their power over England in general (which however held but 24 years) we muſt of courſe, for that time, be under Daniſh government.

The like is true of the Norman conqueſt, which ſucceeded next. Upon this revolution (anno 1066) the iſland was preſented to one of the firſt favourites in the conqueror's train, viz. the forementioned William Fitz-Oſborn, then alſo created Earl of Hereford. This nobleman was therefore the firſt lord of the iſland, who held it as a fief under the grant of an Engliſh monarch. He had two ſons, but both dying before him, he was ſucceeded in this lordſhip by his grandſon Richard de Rivers, Earl of Exeter, who being baniſhed for ſome inſurrections againſt William Rufus, it was afterwards held in ſucceſſion by the Earls of Devon and their heirs for ten or eleven deſcents, i. e. till about the middle of the 13th century. The laſt branch of this family was the Lady *Iſabella de Fortibus*, who ſold the lordſhip of it to Edward I. for

20,000 marks. Thus the iſland again became the property of the crown, and the government of it was beſtowed upon ſuch objects as either ſervice or flattery had placed in the ſun-ſhine of royal favour. Among the reſt Henry VI. had a fancy to make Henry de Beauchamp, Duke of Warwick, King of the Wight, and he crowned him as ſuch with his own hand; but this dignity, as to the royal part of it, died with its firſt and only poſſeſſor.

It can afford no matter of information or entertainment to enter into a particular detail of the ſucceeding governorſhips as they were conferred in the ſeveral reigns * I ſhall therefore only obſerve in general, that in time of former diſputes with France,

* The following names, however, appear in Prynne's Records, (p. 208) John Fitz-Thomas—Richard de Aſton—Nicholas de Boſe—John Langford, —John Galeden—William de Monte acuto E. of Sarum—Henry Duke of Somerſet—Garidge Gate, Knt. A Lord Rivers; and among the reſt, *Gaveſton*, favourite to Edward II. and Margaret his wife, (p. 215.)

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the military arrangements for our defence were conſidered as objects of great national importance. Thus in the reign of Edward III. we find beacons were erected in no leſs than 29 different places in order to ſpread the alarm of an approaching enemy. At each of theſe, two men by day and four by night, were conſtantly obliged to keep watch, and ward; proprietors or holders of lands, were compelled to find men and arms at the proportion of one man for every 20l. a year. The lord of the iſland found 76 men, and the clergy who held the beſt livings, 16 amongſt them.* Some of the



* Ces ſont les gardes ſervices des gents de ſeinte Egliſe de L'iſle de Wight, ordonnez en defens de la dite Iſle en tems de guerre.—De la Perſonne de l'egliſe de Brerdying pur lx livres de rente en la dite Iſle 2 hommes d'arms, &c. Prynne p. 209. The reader may not be diſpleaſed to ſee how the ſeveral livings were valued at that time, viz.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Brading — | 60 | Gatcombe and Chale | 40 |
| Godſhill — | 100 | Freſhwater — | 40 |
| Newchurch — | 100 | Shalfleet — | 40 |
| Atherton — | 40 | Calborn — | 40 |

Cariſbrooke

chief eccleſiaſtical benefices even out of the iſland were obliged to contribute their certain quotas towards the expence of defending it, ſuch as the Abbot of Glaſtonbury, Biſhop of Wincheſter, &c. all which aids, were ſummonſable at the pleaſure of the Cuſtos Inſulæ, or warden of the iſland, who was appointed by the crown, and whoſe power in caſes of emergency, was ſimilar to that of a Roman dictator.

The French, notwithſtanding theſe precautions, found ſome few opportunities to make good their landing, and to create ſome trouble. In the reign of Richard II. they ſet fire to ſeveral places, and laid ſiege to Cariſbrooke Caſtle, but after levying ſome contributions, they retired without carrying their point. In the years 1403 and 1545, we alſo meet with ſimilar attempts, in which ſome miſchief was done; but on

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cariſbrooke — | 40 | Newtown — — | 30 |
| St. Helena — — | 40 | Brixton — — | 40 |

A proportion to their preſent value, perhaps, of about one to five.

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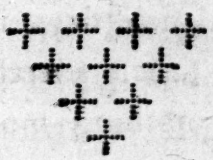
the whole, they were attended with ſtill leſs ſucceſs. Theſe ſpecimens ſhew us what, under Providence, is the great Palladium of Britiſh ſecurity. Since the ſuperiority of our naval ſtrength has been felt and acknowledged, nothing of this kind has given us any alarm.

Within the memory, however, of many who are ſtill living, two regiments of militia were conſtantly kept up and exerciſed in the military art. They had for this purpoſe ſeveral field days in the year, but, as by degrees, theſe meetings came to be conſidered as nothing more than holiday parade, they were at length totally dropt. Under the late act indeed, about 60 men have been yearly trained to this exerciſe. Beſides this the only remains of our military eſtabliſhment, are the continuance of a governor, lieutenant governor, with captains, gunners, and ſoldiers to the ſeveral garriſons, all which, though they have handſome appointments, are become mere ſine-cures. It is eaſy to ſee

into what ſcale theſe *inſtrumenta regni* are intended to throw a weight; but how far they are neceſſary to keep the political balance even is not for me to determine, nor do you need any information on this head from, &c.



LET-

## LETTER IV.

WITH this letter, dear Sir, I ſhall finiſh my correſpondence with you on the preſent ſubject, as it will then be carried to as much extent as probably you will either expect or deſire, &c.

I do not think we can by any means be ſaid to be a populous country in proportion to our extent of ground. How far we may be ſo called when compared with other iſlands on the ſame coaſt, I pretend not to know. We are certainly ſo when compared with our former ſelves, if 1200 families, as mentioned in the days of Cerdic, were any thing like their uſual complement. Families, I think, ſeldom run to more than five or ſix perſons upon an average, which would make the whole amount to be not more

more than ſix or ſeven thouſand people. We have at preſent, I ſhould ſuppoſe, near half that number in Newport only,* and as theſe can hardly be reckoned more than about a tenth part of the whole, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe the number of ſouls in the iſland at large, to be ſomewhere about 20,000. Even this is a very moderate number for ſuch an extent, as there are ſeveral ſingle manufacturing towns which are ſaid to contain many more. And yet we do not ſeem to want people. The reaſon of this will ſoon appear upon conſidering, that in all places the number of hands will not only bear a proportion to the quantity of buſineſs done, but alſo to the nature and quality of that buſineſs. This is the caſe with us. Our trade in its kind is by no means inconſiderable. I am well informed it pays to government not leſs than 30,000 a year. But the nature of it is ſuch that of all other, perhaps, it requires the feweſt

* By an account lately taken they were found to be 2860.

hands

hands in proportion to the value of the concern. A farmer, a mealman or a malter, may be in as large a way as a manufacturer of cloth or hard wares, but yet one of the firſt mentioned can manage his buſineſs with a tenth part of the aſſiſtance which the others want.

With regard to our inhabitants themſelves, however, I ſhall naturally be led, in deſcending to particulars, to ſpeak of ſuch as have the firſt claim to notice in reſpect to rank and property. Some indeed, have great eſtates in the iſland, who do not reſide in it, as the Right Honourable Lord Edgcombe, Sir John Carter, and Thomas Fairfax, Eſq. But I mean to ſpeak of ſtated inhabitants. Of theſe I had occaſion juſt to mention one in the cloſe of my ſecond letter, beſides whom, the only one of the Right Honourable diſtinction is the Lady Holmes, whoſe manſion is in the town of Newport. As the late Lord Holmes left no iſſue, and his title was indeſcendable, the heir to his eſtates

both

both here and in Ireland (of which kingdom he was a Baron) is the preſent Rev. Leonard Troughear Holmes, of *Weſtover* in the pariſh of Calbourn.

Another family of diſtinction have their ſummer reſidence at their ſeat at *Nunwell*, near Brading, I mean that of the preſent Sir William Oglander, Bart. It is remarkable that this diſtinguiſhed family has been in the iſland probably ever ſince the conqueſt, mention being made of it ſo far back as the 18th of Edward II. (anno 1325.) It was then that Robert Oglander appears to have been among the jurors upon an inqueſt at Shidebridge,* concerning ſuch as were obliged by ancient uſage to attend the beacons, &c. He was therefore then conſidered as an old inhabitant, and who, as ſuch, was well acquainted with the matter in queſ-

* The then Campus Martius of the Iſland, about three-fourths of a mile from Newport.

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tion.‖ The *Urry* family is under the like predicament, one of them alſo being impannelled upon the ſame occaſion, and of which there are reſpectable branches ſtill ſubſiſting. The above inqueſt was made and taken before John Horſey and John Liſle, who bore their commiſſion under the title of *Cuſtodes Portuum*. A deſcendent of the former of theſe gentlemen, was Sir Edward Horſey, many years governor of the iſland. His monument in armour is in Newport church. John de Liſle was afterwards created Baron de Inſula, with a penſion of 200 marks a year to enable him the better to ſupport that dignity. One cannot but remark the contraſt between this ancient family and that of the Oglanders.* The latter ſtill continues

‖ Inquiſitio capta apud Schidhambrigge die Jovis, &c. anno regni Edvardi filii Regis Edvardi decimo octavo coram Johanne de la Hoeſe & Joh. de Inſula cuſtodibus portuum, &c. per ſacramentum Roberti Urry, Roberti D'ogelandie, &c. Prynne, p. 209.

* The Madam Liſle, who at a great age was among the fatal ſufferers in the affair of Monmouth, was

tinues to be one of the firſt families in the iſland, whereas the former is not only extinct (at leaſt in theſe parts) but the laſt branch of it was many years a common ſoldier, and died a few years ſince in great obſcurity.‡

But to return to my narrative. Another family of like rank and of long ſtanding in the iſland, is that of the preſent Sir Richard Worſley, of Appuldercombe, Bart.‖ His ſeat is near Godſhill, where there are ſeveral monuments of his anceſtors to be ſeen in the church, which are of very curious marble and fine workmanſhip. Appuldercombe houſe is very an-

was a lady of this unfortunate family. Her crime was giving entertainment to one *Hicks*, a preſbyterian clergyman, whoſe zeal it ſeems led him to have ſome concern in that ill-judged buſineſs.

Weſt. Martyrology.

‡ In the old Norman French they are called D'ogelandie, as Robert D'ogelandie, i. e. Robert of the Oakland, or Robert the Oaklander, from whence no doubt, the name Oglander.

‖ Now member for the Borough of Newport.

cient,

cient, being formerly the property, and I ſuppoſe, the reſidence of the lady Iſabella de Fortibus, but it has been modernifed and beautified at a vaſt expence both by the late Sir Thomas and the preſent Sir Richard. It is, and will be (for its improvements are not yet compleated) one of the chief objects of the kind both for pleaſantneſs of ſituation, and the ornaments by which it is decorated. The paintings wherewith it is enriched from Italy and other parts, are ſaid to be choſen with great taſte, and conſequently to be of great value, and near it is a monument which commands one of the fineſt internal proſpects in the whole iſland. There are ſeveral branches of this family who have genteel manſions in different parts of it, as that of Edward Meux Worſley, Eſq. of Gatcombe, which was built by the late Sir Edward, and much admired for its elegance of taſte and ſituation. Not far from this is that of Robert Worſley,

Eſq; at Pidford, which is alſo modern built, and very neat. To theſe may be added the ſeats of Sir Fitz-Williams Barrington, of Swainſton, Bart. and that of the late John Leigh, Eſq; at North-Court (now or late the reſidence of the Right Honourable the Lord Ducey) both which are worth a ſtranger's attention. But that which is thought to merit it moſt, in point of ſituation and for the exceeding elegance of its gardens, is the ſeat of Naſh Groſe, Eſq; near Ride.—But it would be tedious to mention every gentleman whoſe property entitles him to the rank of eſquire, or whoſe country reſidence adds to the pleaſure of a view of our iſland.

I proceed therefore to take ſome notice of that which after all is the parent and ſupport of every elegance and comfort of life; I mean the articles of trade and commerce. This you will conclude from what has been already obſerved, conſiſts chiefly with us of dealings in *corn* and *wool*. Theſe

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are the principal productions of the iſland, and conſequently, our ſtaple commodities. Of the former perhaps more is produced on this ſpot than on any ground of the like extent in his Majeſty's dominions. Our home conſumption (I mean within the iſland) is hardly ſuppoſed to be a tenth part of it. We are in a manner the granary of the weſtern countries, and the chief reſource of government contracts for wheat, malt, flour and biſcuit, You will hence ſuppoſe that the quantities of corn exported either in grain or in flour are very large, which creates a principal part of that employment which is found for our ſhipping and the mills, at which a large quantity of our wheat is manufactured. There are no leſs than eight or nine water mills for this purpoſe within about a mile of the town of Newport, beſides many others, ſome of which will grind and dreſs from 15 to 20 loads a week. From theſe flour is exported to

Ireland and the weſtern counties of England, where the produce in this way is comparatively ſmall, and conſumers (for the reaſon already given) more numerous in proportion. At times when exportations abroad alſo are allowable and profitable to the merchant, he naturally looks to the market of Newport for a ſupply, at which there are ſometimes ſeen 200 waggons in one day laden with thoſe valuable articles of wheat and barley, but of late years the cuſtom of ſelling by ſample only, has much prevailed.

As to our wool (though we grow large quantities) ſcarce any of it is manufactured here. In this article our principal mercers are the merchants. They take it all of the farmer at the market price, and export it in the fleece for the uſe of the ſtaplers and clothiers of the weſtern and northern counties.

There are two other commodities which ſeem to have as good a title to the rank

of

of natural curioſities as to be conſidered among the articles of commerce. Theſe are copperas ſtones and white ſhining ſand. The former are gathered up in heaps on the ſouth ſhore, and occaſionally ſent to London, &c. for the purpoſe of producing the ſeveral ſpecies of vitriol. The latter is dug out of ſome very valuable mines, which are the property of David Urry, Eſq; near Yarmouth; and from thence ſent to London and Briſtol for the uſe of the glaſs manufacturies.

I have already hinted that what other foreign merchandize we have, chiefly centers at Cowes, which is beſt adapted to that purpoſe, as being the chief port in the iſland. Here the rice ſhips from Carolina intended for foreign markets, have uſually cleared and paid their duties, a benefit of which the loſs has been ſeverely felt, as the effect of the late American war, and of which alas! there are now but little hopes that it will ever re-

turn.—What we have to expect in time to come experience only can ſhew, but hitherto the ſeveral ſources of buſineſs, which have been mentioned, have afforded not only employment to the induſtrious poor, but encreaſe of fortune and riches to thoſe whoſe properties have been occupied in them. Few places have a greater proportion of people who have made handſome acquiſitions in buſineſs, where induſtry in general is better recompenſed, fewer objects of diſtreſs to be ſeen, or the poor and diſabled better provided for. Our want of manufacturies indeed, muſt always have this inconvenience attending it, that thoſe who are either too old or too young to undertake much labour, rather want ſubjects for that little of which they are capable. This renders the almoſt entire ſupport of both when poor, a heavy and growing charge. A remedy for this is not eaſy to be applied.

Whilſt

Whilſt thoſe of both ſexes are young and in full ſtrength, they want not employ as huſbandmen, artificers, mariners, or houſhold ſervants. In all theſe they can get better wages than mannfacturers in general can afford to give. For this reaſon a remedy, if attempted to be ſet on foot, would hardly meet with acceptance, the conſequence of which is, and probably will continue to be, that as ſoon as men are incapable of a proper day's labour, they ceaſe to labour at all, and think of nothing but the pariſh funds for their chief ſupport.

In ſome meaſure to give a check to this growing evil, the principal gentlemen of the iſland formed a ſcheme about ſeven or eight years ſince, of eſtabliſhing by act of parliament one general *houſe of induſtry* for the whole iſland. The plan was adopted and carried into execution at a very large expence. The building for this purpoſe is erected in the foreſt of Partchurſt,

near

near Newport, and contains generally about 500 paupers. The ſcheme is certainly capable of being made a public benefit, and the people already make moſt of their own wearables, but what advantages will accrue from it on the whole, a more mature ſtate will beſt diſcover. It ſtill remains to be wiſhed that the children of the poorer ſort, whoſe parents are not a public expence, could find a more early and ready way to be uſefully employed. It was this apparent defect which gave riſe to a very humane inſtitution, which has now ſubſiſted near twenty years, viz. a ſubſcription ſchool for poor girls, in which about twenty at a time are clothed, taught to work, read and write, till they are fit to undertake an eaſy introductory ſervice.

To ſuch of theſe a premium is given as continue in their firſt place for a whole year and merit a good character. Thus are they introduced into life, and ſet as it were on their own legs, as uſeful and reſpectable

reſpectable members of ſociety. — Hard indeed is the fate of thoſe poor children whoſe parents have left them no other inheritance but their own depravity, lazineſs, and vice. They need our aſſiſtance the more, as they ſeem to deſerve it leſs, if peradventure they may be reſcued from final ruin. Happy they who are bleſt both with the feeling heart, and the able hand! the latter of which is perhaps the only advantage which a virtuous mind can envy the great.

I am, with the moſt cordial reſpect,

Dear Sir, &c.

FINIS.